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Monday, 26 March 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous: I am indeed pleased to be here today as the Council once again debates the important issue of the role of peacekeepers in peacebuilding and the related issue of transitions.

In the last three years, we have come a long way in terms of sharpening our understanding of what building peace entails. There is a consensus across the United Nations and beyond on the broad priorities of what is inevitably a complex and long-term effort.

Building peace means helping national institutions reach a point where they are able to maintain a sufficient level of stability and security, in particular through respect for the rule of law and human rights. It also means that such national institutions are sufficiently representative to maintain the consensus necessary to advance the peacebuilding process. Peace is more likely to be sustained if tangible progress is also made in addressing basic needs and advancing economic recovery.

The consensus on peacebuilding has been refined through the report (S/2009/304) of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict and further elaborated on in the 2011 *World Development Report*. The Secretary-General's 2009 report in particular provides a broad framework by highlighting five recurring priorities for United Nations engagement in peacebuilding: first, the delivery of basic safety and security for citizens; secondly, inclusive political processes; thirdly, the provision of basic services; fourthly, the restoration of core Government functions; and fifthly, economic revitalization.

Building peace is an ambitious undertaking; it reflects a generational effort that will continue long after peacekeepers have left. Success depends on national and international political will and decades of support from a broad array of international and regional actors.

What, then, is the specific role of peacekeepers in this effort? Peacekeepers are seen as the guarantors of the fragile shift from conflict to peace. When the Council mandates peacekeeping operations, it is not only to stabilize the country and keep the peace but also to contribute to the building of a sustainable peace.

Multidimensional peacekeeping operations are fundamentally political tools. A study undertaken by the Centre for International Cooperation on the peacebuilding elements of peacekeeping mandates found that peacebuilding tasks have been a steady feature of peacekeeping mandates since the early 1990s. Over time, those tasks have become more complex and wide-ranging. Most of the mandated peacebuilding tasks focus on the first two priority areas outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, namely, support for basic safety and security, and support for political processes. For instance, in resolution 1996 (2011), which set the mandate of United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the term "peacebuilding" is mentioned nine times. Talking about the role of peacekeepers in peacebuilding is not about expanding peacekeeping or adding new tasks to mandates. It is about making the most of the tasks that peacekeepers are already being asked to perform.

In an effort to further clarify the role of peacekeepers in peacebuilding vis-à-vis other actors, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support developed their "nexus paper", which states that peacekeeping operations have three peacebuilding roles: first, we help Governments articulate priorities by supporting consensus among national counterparts and the broader international community, and guiding overall strategy development and implementation; secondly, we enable other national and international actors to implement peacebuilding tasks by providing a security umbrella, logistical support and political space for reconciliation

efforts and economic recovery to develop; and, thirdly, we implement certain early peacebuilding tasks ourselves, including through support for political processes, security sector reform and by engaging in early capacity-building in certain areas, in close collaboration with other partners.

While we have developed a better and shared understanding of what peacebuilding entails and our specific role in it, the answer to successful peacebuilding does not lie in terms and definitions. The true challenge remains the question of how we build peace. To give just one example, there is broad consensus that strengthened institutions are a critical element of sustainable peace. Yet after years of engagement in such countries as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste, Haiti and others, despite undeniable and substantial progress, national institutions remain fragile and we, as well as our partners, are still grappling to find the best approach that would allow us to improve our individual contributions and yield the expected results.

To maximize the United Nations contribution to building peace, and specifically that of peacekeepers, three elements are critical. We must ensure that we identify and address the specific priorities of a country and its people. We have to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various United Nations actors and strengthen our partnerships with non-United Nations actors. We should periodically review and adjust our engagement to best adapt to an evolving situation on the ground.

Applying these elements continuously and systematically throughout our presence will have the added benefit of facilitating a more controlled drawdown and withdrawal of our engagement, and thereby help guarantee that our combined investment will result in long-lasting progress.

We do not believe that peacekeepers should address the full spectrum of peacebuilding activities. Peacekeepers are best suited to prioritizing those initiatives that advance the peace process or political objectives of a mission. These initiatives may also ensure security or lay the foundation for longer-term institution-building in a few key areas. The DPKO-DFS early peacebuilding strategy guides peacekeeping operations to use this political and security prism to identify appropriate activities. For the rest, other partners must come to the fore.

As I mentioned earlier, this is not about expanding the tasks of peacekeepers. In our experience, the Council does not need to assign new or more detailed tasks or mandates to peacekeeping operations. Rather, our focus should be on translating the broad goals of the Council into operational plans and tools on the basis of national priorities.

Determining national priorities in post-conflict countries is indeed a delicate task. When societies are still too torn and politically polarized, and when national consensus and reconciliation remain elusive, formulating objectives and pursuing them in a consensual manner is a political challenge. This is why the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General is essential to balancing the political process and institution-building imperatives, in close consultation with national actors. Also, institutional capacity to formulate priorities can be weak or non-existent. We must avoid overwhelming fragile institutions, and we must provide consistent and coherent support.

Strong national ownership and leadership in the formulation of peacebuilding priorities are essential. In Liberia, the host Government and the Peacebuilding Commission adopted a statement of mutual commitments in October 2010, which outlines commonly agreed peacebuilding priorities: the rule of law, security sector reform and national reconciliation. In Timor-Leste, the Strategic Development Plan provides the basis for international support to the country and is coordinated through the national priorities programme supported by the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste. The South Sudan Development Plan provides the national priorities around which the United Nations country team and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan have developed their peacebuilding goals, called for in Security Council resolution 1996 (2011).

In this context, I would like to also mention the New Deal, which, as members know, was adopted at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of Korea, last year and aims at aligning international development assistance around five peacebuilding and State-building goals. The New Deal stresses mutual obligations and strong national ownership. Among the signatories, seven countries playing host to United Nations missions — Afghanistan, Liberia, Timor-Leste, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and

the Central African Republic — have volunteered to trial this new approach. The Government of South Sudan has also requested the United Nations family to orient its engagement around those goals.

The New Deal reflects a strong expression of commitment by host countries to strengthening their leadership role in the peacebuilding process. We are working closely with relevant missions, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank on the follow up to the New Deal at the global level.

We count on Member States to align their various national policies behind those priorities articulated by host countries, and to speak with one voice in their multiple functions as Council members, representatives to the Fifth Committee, members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, or members of executive boards of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and international financial institutions.

To help national actors transition from war to peace, we have to work in partnership with United Nations and non-United Nations actors. Integrated, multidimensional United Nations missions help to realize this partnership as they bring together, through one leadership team, the whole spectrum of the capacities of the United Nations system. Yet, differing mandates, governance structures and financing arrangements complicate effective coordination and coherence focused on priorities.

An answer to this challenge lies in integrated planning and leadership. The integrated mission planning process provides a framework through which the United Nations leadership on the ground can articulate a joint vision and strategy for United Nations engagement based on the mandate and national priorities. A strong integrated plan would ideally clarify the contributions of each United Nations actor based on comparative advantage and actual capacity to deliver.

Responsibilities may change over time as priorities and capacities shift. Peacekeeping missions have a restricted time horizon and must synchronize their plans with those actors better suited to undertaking long-term engagements. For their part, United Nations partners often have limited capacities in the early post-conflict period and need time to scale up. In such circumstances, we try to bring our relative strengths to bear. For instance, in the Sudan in 2005, the peacekeeping mission provided bridge funding for the integrated United Nations disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme until the United Nations Development Programme-administered Multi-Donor Trust Fund became available.

We must do more to increase incentives across the United Nations to work together. The international review of civilian capacities (see S/2011/85) recommended strengthening interoperability and flexibility across the United Nations to make better use of our own resources to support peacebuilding priorities and harmonize service delivery across agencies. DPKO is working within the Secretary-General's Steering Committee on civilian capacity to see how best to take these recommendations forward.

The United Nations is only one of many actors contributing to any peacebuilding effort. Building strong partnerships with regional organizations, bilateral partners and international financial institutions in the early stages of our planning processes is also necessary to ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach. Likewise, as missions draw down, regional and bilateral partners are critical as risks may persist after mission drawdown, requiring the planning of over-the-horizon security guarantees with the help of partners.

This takes me to my final point. How do we know when to move beyond a peacekeeping mission? Clearly, there is no easy, one-size-fits-all answer to this question. Just as the full impact of peacebuilding cannot be measured quantitatively, it requires keen judgment to know when it is appropriate for peacekeepers to withdraw. A key consideration in many cases is the need for the security assistance represented by blue-helmeted troops. As they draw down, the civilian elements of a peacekeeping operation may in some cases continue in a follow on presence. Indeed, the functions reflected in the mandate of peacebuilding missions or integrated offices are largely the same as those of multidimensional peacekeeping operations because they are focused on the same goal, namely, supporting a political process, assisting with institution-building in specific areas and linking through integration with the United Nations country team to ensure a coherent approach.

In an ideal scenario, drawdown should happen gradually and on the basis of a careful review of the

situation on the ground, discussions with our national, bilateral and regional partners, testing of the host country's capacity to assume responsibilities and, of course, public perceptions. Benchmarks for drawdown and exit should be included in our initial deployment plans, and revised to reflect the evolving situation on the ground.

It is clear that transitions do not follow a linear process. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the mandate, size, components and structure of the Mission have evolved over the last 12 years to reflect the changes in the political and security situation. As part of the last reconfiguration, we strengthened our peacebuilding contribution in the west while maintaining a very strong focus on the protection of civilians in the eastern parts of the country.

In Liberia, in February 2012, we conducted a technical assessment mission, the conclusions of which suggested that the security situation would allow for a reduction of the force component of the United Nations Mission in Liberia over the next three years but encouraged strengthening our police presence there, potentially reconfiguring our civilian roles and maintaining our political engagement.

That is why a regular review and adjustment of our mandates needs to consider the roles of United Nations and non-United Nations partners and their contributions to the building of peace, along with what we expect to be a possible follow-on presence. A drawdown for a mission often means significant adjustment and the start-up or surge of activities for our partners. A transition is not, and should not be, about simply reducing numbers in a peacekeeping operation.

No matter how much progress a country has made towards building peace, we have to be mindful that the departure of a peacekeeping mission can be expected to raise anxieties and may be destabilizing in and of itself. Building confidence between the host Government, key national stakeholders and the international community and clearly articulating the facts of a transition through continued dialogue and communication strategies are critical to a successful drawdown plan.

Efforts to build peace will continue long after a peacekeeping mission has left a country. As peacekeepers, we have a responsibility to countries emerging from conflict to help secure a peace that will endure without our presence.

The President: I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Malcorra.

Ms. Malcorra: I would like to join in Mr. Ladsous' recognition of the importance of United Nations engagement in peacebuilding in our mission areas and note the fundamental role of effective transitions in ensuring that we leave behind a sustainable peace.

Delivering an effective response to the peacebuilding needs of post-conflict countries requires from field support systems the same agility and flexibility that is required for other peacekeeping tasks. Indeed, the magnitude and extent of field missions and the funding involved throughout the duration of a mission's life cycle can have a significant impact, through job creation and local procurement, for example, each of which contributes to the building of peace. At the same time, it is recognized that their impact on the socio-economic situation can also be negative, for example, as a result of environmental degradation or distortions made to the job market.

In the global field support strategy (GFSS), due consideration has been given to the potential social and economic impact of United Nations missions and the need to support mission goals in peacebuilding. I would like to take this opportunity today to brief the Council on some examples where support given to field operations has had a positive impact.

The economic impact of our large multidimensional field missions is significant, especially when considering that deployment often occurs in post-conflict nations without a stable macroeconomic climate, which makes local acquisition of goods and services very difficult. As part of our strategy, we are introducing mechanisms that can promote local and regional procurement, which is an activity that can plant the seeds for private sector development.

To that end, the GFSS will enable our teams on the ground to target local vendors and clearly communicate procurement requirements in the official language of the country where possible. That can be challenging in the start-up phase of a mission, and it may not be feasible to rely on the local market.

However, over time, local vendors can get a sense of the requirements of the mission, and hopefully their business sense and ingenuity will encourage them to start offering the goods and services required.

There are certain products and services for which the local market can have a distinct advantage. Although that may represent a low percentage of our overall procurement, it can have an important impact on the local market. The flow-on effect in the private sector can be considerable and, if properly planned, can generate a growing and sustainable process for propelling individuals into long-term development, thereby contributing to efforts to break the cycle of poverty. It goes without saying that all such efforts must be undertaken in the context of United Nations rules and regulations.

Efforts have also been made to focus on a mission's ability to address critical social issues such as unemployment. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) provided clear and positive examples in that regard. High levels of unemployment and slow economic recovery make it difficult for youth and war-affected populations to find legal income-generating opportunities locally. As was explained in the 2011 *World Development Report*, such a situation presents a serious impediment to war-affected populations' ability to establish alternative livelihoods and encourage sustainable reintegration in local communities. In response to that need, UNMIL and its partners — the World Bank, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Public Works — designed a series of labour-intensive road repair projects designed to increase accessibility and create short-term employment opportunities. The projects were concentrated around vulnerable communities, such as communities along borders and those in close proximity to desirable natural resources.

Such projects created more than 75,000 jobs and channelled almost $6 million into local communities, with the workforce comprising representation from all communities, ex-combatants, returnees and women. Six hundred kilometres of primary roads and 300 kilometres of secondary roads were rehabilitated, which improved year-round access to many parts of the country.

The impact of the projects was reviewed through an independent assessment that concluded that the security situation in communities established along the roads improved, as there were real job opportunities. Furthermore, income was reinvested in small businesses, used to repay debt and put towards longer-term expenses such as education and housing. In other words, the project was building peace.

From a Department of Field Support perspective, the issue of transitions from one United Nations presence to another is equally critical, often requiring drawdown or sometimes a surge in operations. In Burundi and Sierra Leone, for instance, the liquidation of one mission coincided with the start-up of another. One of the key lessons we have learned from such transitions is the need to prepare contingency plans in order to lay the foundation for adequate support for the possible follow-on presence, in addition to building a sustainable peace. Transitions may be inherently political processes, but they can succeed only if they are well prepared and executed. For that to happen, it is crucial that the substantive side and the support side plan in an integrated manner. That is particularly important as we need to recognize that many support issues, such as the question of asset liquidation, are highly political, while also dealing with the issue of expectations management and a fear of mission exit in terms of socio-economic impact.

In many countries, peacekeeping missions provide major support to national authorities with regard to infrastructure maintenance, transport and logistics, among others. As with our efforts in peacebuilding, we also have to work with our national counterparts to prepare for the impact that mission drawdown is likely to have on national resources, capacities and budgets.

The experiences of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and UNMIL demonstrate how joint planning with national counterparts can address those challenges and, to the extent possible, mitigate the impact of reduced logistical and infrastructural support to our national partners through coordinated planning and capacity-building. That being said, such a reduction in peacekeeping resources has wider implications for all partners, not only the national Government, as it is likely to impact on those partner's programmes and require increased commitment by them, both within the United Nations and beyond.

Against that background and recognizing the importance of integrating support services, we are

working with our partners in the Integration Steering Group and its sub-working groups to harmonize support costs across the United Nations. That will extend our services to agencies, funds and programmes and create greater transparency on how a smaller role of one United Nations entity will impact the resource requirements of others on the ground. That will also be facilitated through greater cooperation on the issue of trust funds and support costs applied to them. In this regard, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Secretariat have signed a memorandum of understanding that has overcome past funding constraints on the Peacebuilding Fund. The broader cost-recovery policy directed by the Controller is well under way.

A different yet important contribution the United Nations brings to post-conflict societies is in the form of national capacity development. Several of our missions have introduced specific strategies and programmes, such as certification programmes, that are aimed at strengthening national staff capacity. That was done in the Sudan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Timor-Leste. That should be our priority from the outset, given that national staff will play a critical role in the development of their country beyond our presence.

Our ongoing work on civilian capacities will be another vital part of that effort. Accessing more effectively the needed civilian experts and deploying them into missions to support the development of national capacities and to help us plan and execute peacebuilding tasks and effective transitions will depend on stronger partnerships between the United Nations and external providers, principally Member States. As such, we have to work together if we are to succeed.

Critically, national ownership underpins the entire civilian capacity initiative. That was identified clearly in the recent regional consultations in Bali, where the Finance Minister of Timor-Leste stressed her country's wish to lead its own peacebuilding process and direct international support in accordance with the country's own priorities.

Better support to national capacity-building is therefore a priority for civilian capacity, which in turn must be a priority for peacebuilding and effective transitions. UNDP is leading a system-wide group in looking at how we can do better in post-conflict contexts, and is carrying out a survey of United Nations field presences to understand what tools are needed to do this more effectively. We expect that UNDP will be able to make recommendations this summer.

The situation does remain challenging, however. We still fail to deploy timely, certain civilian capacities in a timely manner to countries emerging from conflict and face persistent capacity gaps in five core areas: safety and security, the rule of law, inclusive political processes, core Government functionality and economic revitalization. Much like with our sourcing of key enabling assets for peacekeeping, we are also having difficulty in accessing niche capacities to respond to specialized needs.

We are, however, working out how to tackle those challenges. We are focused on building partnerships with Member States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and others, and on South-South cooperation in this regard. We are also recognizing the added value that comes from the real world experience of post-conflict recovery, democratic transition or building national institutions from scratch or very low capacity. That is the sort of capacity that those nations emerging from conflict find most useful — the experience of those who have actually confronted and worked through the same challenges they are now facing.

We must ensure that we are working to our strengths or, as we put it, delivering based on the principle of comparative advantage. Missions do not have to implement everything themselves and, of course, other partners may be better placed to deliver on the wide range of tasks that are expected. We will continue to work towards realizing mechanisms and modalities to best support that process.

Each of those activities — be they focused on the building of peace during a mission, on effectively transitioning to a sustainable and nationally owned peace as we withdraw, or on the deployment of the right civilian personnel to the right place and playing the right roles alongside our partners — are all aimed at delivering on our mandates, building national institutions, and ensuring that we do not have to return again once our missions have left.

The Security Council plays an enormous role in that, setting the direction for our efforts not only through mandates, but also through building and maintaining the political support required for delivery.

In addition, we count on the Council and its members to work with us as partners in ensuring a coherent, coordinated and sustained response to the complex challenges we face in building peace before, during and after the departure of our missions.

The President: I thank Ms. Malcorra for her briefing.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.